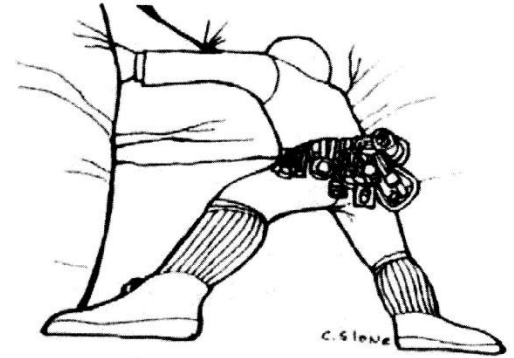




## 3-8 Getting Up There

### Technical Climbing at Devils Tower National Monument

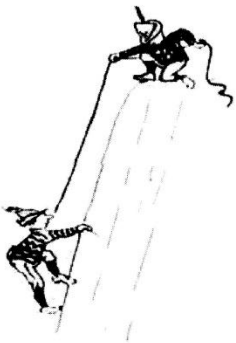
Climbing has been an important part of the park's history for over 100 years. The first people to climb the Tower used a wooden stake ladder built by two local ranchers in 1893. The first technical rock climb of Devils Tower occurred in 1937. The route was named **Weissner** because it was led by a man named Fritz Weissner. The next year, a second route called **Durrance** was established. Durrance continues to be the most popular climb here. Since the first climb, over 200 routes have been created!



But how do they get up there? Most climbers use a technique called free climbing, which means that they use naturally occurring **cracks** in the rock. Ropes and other equipment are used as safety precautions to protect the climber should they fall.

As you see climbers here at the Tower, you may notice their strange outfits. Most climbers wear tight-fitting shoes with sticky **rubber** soles. You will also see them wearing **harnesses** around their waists made of nylon. The most important piece of equipment a climber uses is a **rope**. These ropes come in 165 foot and 200 foot lengths. They are very strong, and are able to withstand tremendous amounts of force – up to 5,000 pounds. How much do you weigh?

Climbers use pieces of gear to catch them if they fall. **Nuts** or chocks are commonly used pieces which slot into the crack. They come in a variety of shapes and sizes. Spring-loaded camming devices (**cams**) are also used. When a trigger is pulled, the cams contract to become smaller. The climber places the device in a crack, then releases the trigger, causing the cams to expand against the sides of the crack. Both of these kinds of protection are attached to the rope by a metal ring called a **carabiner**.

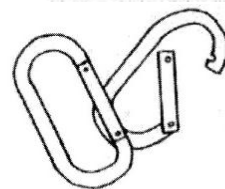


Climbers usually climb with partners. The **lead** climber climbs first, while their partner **belays** them. In other words, the first climber ties to one end of the rope and moves upward as their partner feeds out slack. When the lead climber reaches the end of the **pitch** (section of climb), he or she belays their partner up. While making their way up, the second climber removes all the gear that was placed by the leader.

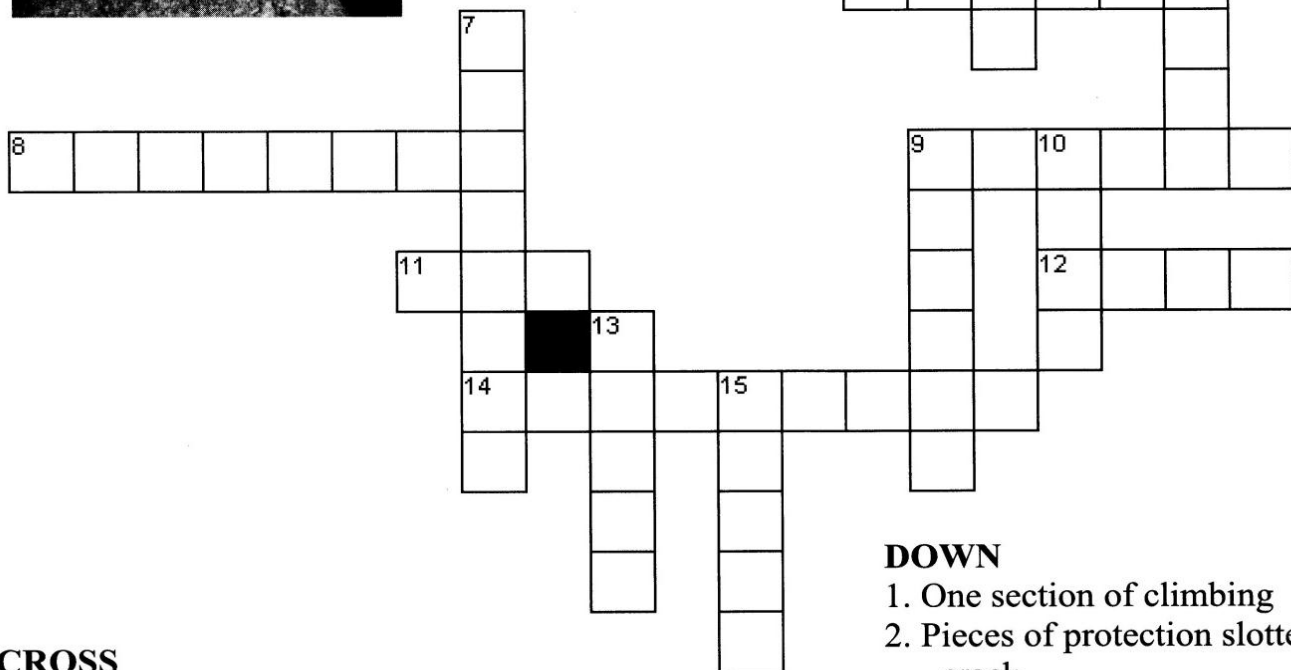
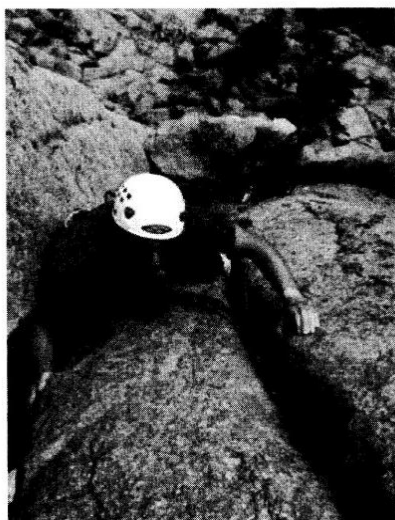
Once they are done climbing, most climbers, **rappel** to descend from the Tower. This is a technique of walking down the face of the **rock** while secured to the rope. The rope, in turn is attached to the rock by an **anchor**. This anchor can often be a permanent **bolt** that is drilled directly into the rock. Once the climbers have reached the bottom of the rappel, they pull the end of the rope with the knot to retrieve it. All of this and more happens in a day of climbing adventures!



# Technical Climbing



Carabiners



## ACROSS

3. Special "belt" worn by climbers
5. Point used to secure rope for rappelling
8. The first rock climbing route on the Tower
9. The soles of climbing shoes are made of this
11. Short name for a "spring-loaded camming device"
12. The first person to climb in a group
14. Ring of metal with a gate

## DOWN

1. One section of climbing
2. Pieces of protection slotted in a crack
4. What the Tower is made of
6. The most important part of safety gear
7. The most popular route on Devils Tower
9. Technique used by most climbers to descend the Tower
10. Permanently fixed anchor drilled into the rock
13. A split in the rock
15. Process of taking up or letting out a partner's rope